

PRICE—\$21 PER MONTH

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PRAYA CENTRAL. [59]

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SANITATION IN HONGKONG.

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with them not only as reasonable men, but men acting for the public good, and for the best, and we must not think they would order a person to do anything which was utterly impossible." All reasonable confidence would be reposed in the Sanitary Board if they would only come out into the light to do their work, but so long as they continue a secret body of men, with their acts to be regarded with suspicion, if a policeman meets a person in the street who is trying to hide something, his suspicions are immediately aroused and he asks to see what it is. So long as the Sanitary Board tries to hide its doings so long will the attitude of the community towards it resemble that of the policeman. The experience of the last few years has shown that the public protection the public can have against the mistakes, incompetency, or corruption of its representatives is publicity. There is nothing in the conditions of Hongkong which should render it an exception to the rule. On this point, therefore, we hope the unofficial members will accept no compromise, but insist that the Sanitary Board should be put on the Bill until the Government has given satisfactory assurances that amendments will be introduced making the Sanitary Board a public and representative body in the fullest sense of the term. The demand for publicity does not arise from any want of confidence in the members of the Sanitary Board, inasmuch as it is an impossible principle that the State "Measures, not men" should be the motto.

THE CHINESE CUSTOMS AND THE FOOD SUPPLY OF HONGKONG AND MACAO

The remarks of the Hon. WONG SHI-KU on Friday afternoon, with reference to the taxation imposed by the Customs Stations outside Hongkong for the importation of principal foodstuffs, has caused the native population, came upon the Government as a surprise. The action of the Customs had already been brought to the notice of the Macao authorities by a petition presented to the Junta da Fazenda by the farmer of the salt monopoly. The salt trade is one of the most important branches of commerce in that tiny city. The salt is brought from the inland to the coast by a branch of the trade which is carried on by a farmer, who pays an annual rent to the Government, for the exclusive right of importing and exporting it and desling in it by wholesalers in the colony. The rental for the last few years has been declining in sympathy with those for other monopolies of the place, and the last farmer, Mr. Ho I-ang, of whom we pointed the least while it is usually put up at auction, for \$8,380 per annum. It is well known that the profits made by the farmer are almost solely due to the smuggling of the salt into the various neighbouring Chinese districts, salt being a Government monopoly in China and the prices charged for it being therefore exorbitant. The petitioners were alarmed at the least, and the navigation of the junk between Hongkong and Macao has been stopped on account of the additional lekin tax imposed upon them by the revenue stations in the proximity of Hongkong, to which the junk owners refused to submit. There being therefore no Chinese carriers to take from Hongkong the salt which is imported there by ocean going vessels, the salt has to be carried to the coast by the river steamers. This entails a large increase in freight, which in turn enhances the cost of the article as to make it almost impossible to deal in it with profit; consequently the trade is now paralysed. The petitioner further alleges that large junks cannot come full of salt as in former days, as that article being a Chinese Government monopoly is liable to confiscation. There is no manner of doubt that the cordons formed by the revenue cruisers has been drawn tighter and tighter every year, and with the last Opium Convention it seemed that the Chinese Government have almost attained their much cherished object of totally doing away with smuggling and contraband. The result has been that the Chinese are forced to put down smuggling, whether of salt or any other article, all law-abiding persons must sympathise, but to tax the food supply of this colony is a very different matter, and we hope the Acting Governor will take energetic action in respect of it.

Another point raised by the salt monopoly is a very important one, and would open up the question of the Liberal Government to the principal drawback to the prosperity of the city, and that is that ocean going vessels refuse to proceed to Macao to discharge their cargo of salt, not only because the discharging ticket is expensive in the roads, but also dangerous; and these vessels are prevented from going into the harbour on account of the small increase in freight earned by extending their voyage to Macao. The next point touched by the petitioner is the extradition of smugglers. He says that the smugglers have all abandoned their salt business for fear of being arrested, and that they should be wanted by the Chinese Government. Smugglers are said to have been arrested on charges of grand crimes committed within the jurisdiction of the Emperor of China, and have been demanded by the Chinese authorities, who never fail to produce witnesses to depose against the culprits. These witnesses are not the Chinese, but the foreigners employed in the revenue service, and their evidence seems to be considered by the Council of Government sufficient to justify the extradition of the accused without the latter being heard. A writer in a Macao paper says that "the worst of it all is that the Government are not prepared to deal with the rule the arrest precedes the obtaining of a warrant, and that the Chinese Government who incurred the expense of advanced money to smugglers who were running salt on their own account and trade, was enough to cause the crisis in the salt trade. The petitioner prays the Government to grant him a concession like that granted the Wei-sing, and that he be permitted to run salt should be made in the rental of the lease. H. E. Senior C. O. Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of Peking, as stated by our Macao correspondent, will give attention to the question of lekin on junk and the stoppage of the trade between Hongkong and Macao, and we are relieved to hear that the British Minister at Macao regards Macao, alone, if the Chinese Government desire to see a revival of trade in that city, they should lose no time in taking the hint thrown out by the petitioner with regard to the shallowness of the harbour, and order out powerful dredgers to deepen it.

THE KWANGTUNG AUTHORITIES AND INLAND NAVIGATION.

Our Canton correspondent mentioned a few days ago that a proclamation had been issued by the native Authorities prohibiting the

launches from plying between Canton and the neighbouring river ports. Junka had found it to their interest to employ launches to tow them when wind and tide were adverse, and a steady towage traffic was being developed. Here was a case in which foreign means of communication had been adopted without the intervention of a foreign capital. The anti-foreign Government of CHANG CHU-CHU, however, could not brook such a movement, and it has been nipped in the bud. Thus while we were in the North official influence used to overcome the objections of the agricultural population to the acquisition of the land for the canal, the same influence in the south, used in the contrary direction, namely, to prevent the adoption of steam on the inland waters. The action of the Canton authorities would be discouraging, were it not that the forces at work at Peking in the direction of the adoption of foreign improvement, which is known to be too strong to be easily overthrown, will prevail very soon. It is not unreasonable, we think, to expect that within the next few years we may see the new river steamers *Yachan* plying to the town from which she takes her name. Such an idea would not doubt be scouted by the Viceroy, but the Excellency must be seeing that the object of the canal is to be attained. It will be long, we imagine, before we see the railway track winding its course over the face of the country in the South of China, but it may not be long before the steamer *Yachan* will become a familiar sound wherever there is water enough to float a vessel. The natural water courses may also be supplemented by canals. Even in England, the home of the railway, the iron horse has been unable to drive canals from the field of competition; and in China, with her facilities for communication by water in the interior, and for the improvement of those communications by the addition of canals, it is but reasonable to suppose that we may see trains of barges towed by steam engines, and canals drawn by a locomotive. A writer in one of our Shanghai contemporaries a few days ago drew attention to the curious circumstance, that while China is being importuned for orders by railway syndicates, in Europe it is canals that are at present in the ascendant. Everywhere there is talk of cutting canals—a ship canal in the United States, a canal for the inland trade of the North Sea, and the Baltic—these are a few of the many canal schemes either in process of execution or incubation. China has not yet reached the stage of ship canals but a brief space of time will, we hope, see the throwing open of her natural water ways, and this will no longer be followed by the presentment of the addition of artificial waterways. Canals have the advantage over railways inasmuch as they would be more readily accepted by the people, for they could not be regarded as an innovation in a country which possesses the Grand Canal, though practically they would be as an innovation in the South.

THE WATER SUPPLY QUESTION IN JAPAN.

The Japanese, influenced doubtless by their knowledge that bad and impure drinking water has been largely responsible for the serious epidemics of cholera which have swept their large towns of late years, are now paying earnest attention to the improvement of their water supply. The Yokohama Water Works, which have cost about 1,000,000 yen, were under construction, are now practically complete, only a few connections remaining to be effected, and in a few weeks the residents in that port will be in possession of a full and regular supply of excellent water. Mr. J. H. T. TUCKER, U.S.E., who was engaged under Colonel PALMER, R.E., on these works, has just returned to Japan, and carries with him, and his chief workmen, will be at liberty to proceed to Osaka and carry out the scheme projected to supply that large and important city with water. The authorities of the so-called Viceroy of Japan are prepared to spend an enormous sum in order to secure the benefit of an uncontaminated water supply, and as it is notorious that the epidemic of cholera in Japan is no difficulty in raising the funds. The Tokyo Authorities also intend to make a move in the same direction, but as they have greater facilities for obtaining the water they do not, we believe, intend to seek foreign assistance in the work, which can easily be accomplished by Japanese engineers who have lately returned from Europe, and the construction of various engineering works in most creditable style. Even little Hakodate has been infected with the desire for a supply of pure water, and the Authorities there recently induced a Colonel PALMER to visit their town, and make a report as to the best means of obtaining a good supply of water. The sanitary authorities in most Japanese towns are now aware of the danger of bad water, and with good water and proved drains there would be little likelihood of epidemics beyond the productivity to the natives for unripe fruit. A good deal of attention is even now paid to drainage in some towns, but the drains do not get sufficiently flushed, and though they only receive house slops and washings a great deal of refuse is still washed down the drains. The fact that the Japanese have so fully acknowledged the blessings of pure water may be accepted as a proof that they are earnest in endeavouring to drive disease from their midst.

Now are the flushing of the drains and supply of pure water for potable use only benefited by the introduction of the Japanese Water Works? The full supply of water they will thus receive will also afford great security against fire, as the water is laid throughout the town, and it will be possible to throw a stream over and three-storied house from the mains, instead of being dependent, as formerly, on the wells, or forced from the roofs of the houses by the use of powerful atrama. The inflammable nature of the buildings in the Japanese towns is a further strong argument in favour of a large and constant water supply, and no doubt has had its weight in inducing the Authorities to undertake the schemes prepared by Colonel PALMER. The following example of the great advantage of the Japanese water supply to Chinese cities, notably Foochow, where fires are frequent and destructive, choleric diarrhoea annually appears at certain seasons. But the Chinese are difficult to convince, especially when there is no immediate perceptible return on the expenditure. Permission has been granted to the Shanghai Water Works Company to carry pipes into the native city from the Settlements, although the excellence of the water has been admitted by some of the officials. The prejudice entertained by the former T'wai for the river water was so strong that there was some substance in it may per-

however, still linger among some of the mairauds. At all events, they have proved their preference for pure over dirty water by showing willingness to sanction its introduction into the city. Thus they have been, in this respect, the best of all the odours of which the narrow alleys of the city enjoy such a profusion.

THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACT IN CROWN COLONIES.

The *Penang Gazette* is responsible for the statement that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, yielding to the ill-considered convictions of would-be purists at home, has decided that the Contagious Diseases Ordinance, now in force in the Crown Colonies, shall be repealed. Such a step would be a serious calamity to the Straits Settlements, brought by its repeal. In Hongkong many of the women recognise the advantages themselves of the rules to which they are subjected, while all medical men are agreed, I believe, as to the importance of the Act as a protection to the health of the troops and seamen as well as the community generally. It would be but a false modesty if I would prevent all Europeans and natives from lifting up their voices against the proposed change. The physical advantage to the Acts are undeniable, while the objection to them on moral grounds are wholly untenable. In no city in Europe of a vice that is itself as openly as in London, would it be possible to prevent the police from being able to prevent interference; in no city does the respectable female run greater risk of insult. Prostitution is an ugly sore in the social body, surely it is better to treat it by such means as are available than to leave it running unchecked. If it be correct that intention has been or are being set on foot to repeal the Acts in the Colonies, our legal legislation will refuse to assent to such a course.

HONGKONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

A meeting of the Hongkong Legislative Council was held on the 8th inst. There were present—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE ACTING GOVERNOR
Major-General CAMERON, C.B.
Hon. J. RUSSELL, C.M.G., Acting Colonial Secretary.
Hon. F. STEWART, Acting Colonial Secretary.
Hon. E. J. ACRYD, Acting Attorney-General.
Hon. A. LINTAS, Colonial Treasurer.
Hon. J. M. FARRER, Colonial Secretary.
Hon. G. THOMSON, Harbour Master.
Hon. WONG SENG.
Hon. A. P. MACLEWEN.
Hon. J. BULL-IRVING.

Mr. J. M. GUTIERREZ, Acting Clerk of Councils.

MINUTE.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

EXTENSION OF RICHMOND ROAD.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table a minute recommending a vote of £10,000 to be applied to the extension and widening of Richmond Road beyond Richmond Barracks, and of preparing the ground for further extensions.

The minute was referred to the Finance Committee.

THE COLONIAL SURGEON'S REPORT.

The ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the Colonial Surgeon's Report for 1886.

MARINE CERTIFICATES.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE HON. A. P. MACLEWEN will now put certain questions.

He asked the question, "The question which I have given notice as follows—Whether Marine Certificates granted in Singapore are still in force in this Colony, and if not, the reason why the Government refused to renew them, and whether the Government intend to endorse on the Register of the steamer *Singapore* in March this year? (a). What are the instructions of the Government with regard to holders of Marine Certificates who have expired previous to 1st January, 1884, and who are not registered on the Register of the Steamer *Singapore* in March this year? (b). What are the instructions of the Government with regard to holders of Marine Certificates who have expired previous to 1st January, 1884, and who are not registered on the Register of the Steamer *Singapore* in March this year? (c). 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